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The Physic or Exotic Garden

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Pride and Prejudice: The Student Blog

Tuesday, March 26, 2013

The Physic or Exotic Garden

“London; Being an Accurate History and Description of the British Metropolis and its Neighbourhood: To Thirty Miles Extent, from an Actual Perambulation” (1808) by David Hughson paints a picture of the landscape/setting that one would have seen during the Regency, and some which can be read about in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). In this piece of Literature, London is described as the most beautiful place there is. “Nothing can be more beautiful; here is a plain and pleasant country, a rich fertile soil, cultivated and enclosed to the utmost perfection of husbandry; then bespangled with villages, the houses surrounded with gardens, walks, vistas, and avenues, representing all the beauties of building, and all the pleasures of planting.” Multiple places are described ranging from the average household to mansions and Palaces. Some households would depict religious scenes such as a person or scene from the Bible displayed in a painted glass window. In the windows are coats of arms, sundials, and portraits. Gardens and parks, some stretching 13 acres, are “laid out with taste.” Carriages would travel through the park aside from the regular carriage roads. A Palace would be the most grand and vast with much money put into remodeling of rooms, such as turning a room into dancing room. As balls were a popular form of entertainment, it was not uncommon for a room of a grand house to be converted into a dancing room. After Archbishop Laud was beheaded, his palace was converted to a prison where the soldiers lived in excess. The furniture was sold and the coal and wood was reserved for military use. The parish church of St. Mary, Lambeth had a very ancient foundation and the tower remained even after it was rebuilt in the 14th century. The floor was paved with stone and the roof was covered with lead. Gothic arches and windows could also be seen here. An ancient mansion is also described dating back to 1650. The chimney piece is of wood with carved compartments containing items such as family urns and a lion passant guardant. On the back of the grate is a cast of Neptune included with tritons. The Palace of Kew is described, also containing many pictures and portraits. The gardens, which contain 120 acres, were begun by the late Prince of Wales. The Flower Garden, also known as the Physic or Exotic Garden, has two sides that are enclosed with trees, and the end facing the entrance is occupied by an aviary with numerous of both foreign and domestic birds.



Descriptions of places in London that are shown here can also be related to the descriptive settings that Austen provides in *Pride and Prejudice*. Hughson’s illustrations of various paintings and portraits as well as galleries can build a connection to those of Austen’s novel. Hughson describes a manor with detail on each room such as The Long Gallery with all its portraits, The Great Dining Room with all the archbishops, a grand Library, The Presence Chamber with multiple windows containing painted glass, along with other great rooms that make up the vast residence. When Elizabeth Bennet arrives at Pemberley for the first time she is in awe at the vastness of the property. The exterior and interior are described with such detail that is all to her liking that she can imagine spending a lifetime in the place. When her eyes first fell upon the wondrous site, she couldn’t help but admire every remarkable spot and point of view. Elizabeth Bennet originally was not quite taken with Mr. Darcy but once

About

A blog site featuring original research by undergraduate students at Wright State University enrolled in Crystal B. Lal’s *Pride and Prejudice* (Spring 2013).

We hope you enjoy reading about the novel and historical contexts surrounding famous novel. And be sure to participate in CELIA’s Bicentennial events on October 2013. Click [here](#) for more information.

Blog Archive

- ▼ 2013 (26)
 - April (6)
 - ▼ March (19)
 - Inactivity of the Inhabitants of Hertfordshire
 - "Nothing so Unmilitary": Examining How Uniforms Influence the Physic or Exotic Garden
 - I Never in My Life Saw Anything More Elegant than ...
 - Why Will Thou Bind Thy Love Brow?
 - "But the clothes, the wedding clothes!": Fashionable ...
 - "Dancing is of More Importance to a Gentleman Than ...
 - There Are But Few Things Which Can Afford Us Great ...
 - I'll tune my pipe to playful notes ... And hail ...
 - Life is Really Too Short: Was Time with Regency ...
 - The Most Elegant Collateral Embellishment of Taste ...
 - The Importance of Practice
 - "From Every Window There Were Beauties to Be Seen" ...
 - Attract Notice by the Copiousness of His Talk ...
 - Thus Does Gaming Harden the Heart and Swallow up E ...
 - "Harry Will be the Gentleman The Nature of Men ...
 - Pride, My Dear
 - These Works of Fancy
 - She Heard Him With A Visible Emotion
 - February (1)

she explored his mansion, all previous thoughts about him turned positive. The opening line of the novel states “it is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, much be in want of a wife” proves to be true, clarifying that money and estate are held in such high regards when it comes to marriage.

Posted by **Jessica C.** at 3:50 PM

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